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element, while metre imposed itself only slowly and unconsciously." This is a view which hardly accords with the history of metre and rhyme as developed through the Middle Ages, both in Latin—and let us remember what hymnology shows us here—and in the vernacular, and it is not to be admitted too readily for Spanish, in which we have preserved in complete poetic shape so slight a proportion of the early epic.

The details of Menéndez Pidal's exhaustive examination of the metrical and assonantal status of the poem we cannot stay to discuss here. We agree with most of the principles which he deduces, and, in particular, we think that he is right in banishing from oxytonic *á, ó, í* assonances all concomitances except those in unaccented *e* and *i*. Like Coester, he dismisses as unlikely a number of other concomitances which were admitted by Restori, Milá, Lidforss and Dozy. A notable outcome of the whole investigation of the versification of the poem is that (page 123) "it does not contradict the absolute unity of composition which in its three parts [the Exile of the Cid, the Wedding of his Daughters, and the Outrage in the Oak-Grove of Corpes] there is revealed in the subject matter, in the personages and in the geography."

(To be continued.)

J. D. M. FORD.

Harvard University.

LESSINGIANA.

MEHRING, *Die Lessing-Legende*. 2. Aufl. Stuttgart, 1906. xxxii + 426 pp.

OTTO ERNST, *Lessing*. Berlin and Leipzig, no date (*Die Dichtung*, xxxv). 79 pp.

These two books, apparently so different at first sight, are really members of the same great family. Each has a thesis to prove and each takes one small part of Lessing and develops that into a book to prove it. It makes no difference with this kind of book whether the author be friendly to the great man whom he needs for laboratory

purposes or not. In the present instances it happens that both are ardent admirers of Lessing.

Mehring's book is frankly tendentious and iconoclastic. It is socialistic in tone and in its negativ criticism attempts to destroy the "bourgeoise" legend which has, according to Mehring, grown up around Lessing. He is not the ardent filosemite, not a seeker after Prussian favors, and has no part in the universal adulation of the house of Hohenzollern. He is rather at the opposite pole, is pure Saxon (not Slav !) in education, feeling and interest; he owes nothing to Berlin, to the French circle at the court of Frederick the Great and above all, nothing to the inspiration of a national feeling aroused by Hohenzollern prowess in the Seven Years' War. In attempting to break up this notion, Mehring also finds it necessary to combat the idea that the house of Hohenzollern and Prussia have any permanent value in German history. He also attempts to dissipate the halo that surrounds Frederick the Great, whose so-called liberal pronunciamientos on the freedom of the press, etc., Mehring regards as mere diplomatic tricks or shams of one sort or another; in reality, Frederick far from being a liberal co-worker with Lessing in the progress of the nation upward, was a narrow, eighteenth century despot, the vassal in turn of France, Russia and England. The so-called age of Frederick owes nothing to him, even in the way of spur or example.

Whatever truth or novelty there may be in the book, it contains many interesting suggestions and proves many of its individual points as far as the layman is concerned. The author, who for a number of years was connected with *Die Neue Zeit*, knows how to present his case vividly, even drastically, and even the continued vituperation of Scherer and his school (Erich Schmidt, Sauer) does not make the work less interesting or less worth reading. There is, moreover, one fruitful idea at the basis of all the polemics and that is the relation of social and economic conditions to literary output. But here lies also the weakness of the book, for the author sees all history only from the socialistic standpoint and will not grant any other point of view a right to existence. This one-sidedness blinds him to the esthetic side of literature; the *prodesse*

has supplanted the *delectare* and moreover the relations of the subjectivity of the author to his creative work, the delight in creation and the relief after the pains are over are left entirely out of the discussion. Finally, the attempt to see in Lessing only the forerunner of modern Socialism is narrow and unscientific. It would be quite as senseless to deny him all breadth of vision and all democracy of heart.

The very external form of Otto Ernst's book is symbolic of its contents. Its fine leather binding, its delicate end-papers, its clear type and its acceptable if not novel illustrations, make a direct esthetic appeal. But the picture that is drawn is one that Lessing himself would never recognize and the tone of the book is not the Lessing tone. Ernst starts from the idea that Lessing is a poet and not a retorician and illustrates by examples of the effect of Lessing's three great dramas upon himself. In the case of *Minna* he uses the old device of regarding *Minna* as a real person with whom he is in love and who gives him the mitten. This highly subjectiv treatment, with its direct appeal to the emotions and its occasional dithyrambics is quite as one-sided as Mehring's work and its polemics against pessimism and naturalism, if polite, are none the less vehement. The weakness of Ernst's treatment lies in the fact that while he predicates the subjectiv cause as primal and the objectiv effect as secondary and incidental, he fails to develop this for Lessing. But Ernst sees and feels as a poet and a certain exuberant naiveté carries the work along. His book is a good bit of evidence of the abiding power of Lessing as a dramatist.

G. H. DANTON.

Stanford University, Cal.

SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES.

A History of Scandinavian Studies in American Universities. With a Bibliography. By GEORGE T. FLOM, Ph. D., Iowa City, Iowa, 1907. 66 pp. (*Iowa Studies in Language and Literature*, No. 2.)

Professor Flom has here set forth the results of a patient investigation of the past and present

condition of the study of the Scandinavian languages and literatures in American colleges and universities. This was a task well worth undertaking for several reasons. The information gathered in these few score pages has frequently been sought for in vain by students and others interested in the field of Northern *belles-lettres*. Even with an extensive collection of college catalogues and programmes at hand the data to be gleaned has hitherto been but meagre, and it has seldom been satisfactory on such points as the character and extent of the instruction given, the texts most commonly used in introductory courses, and the authors studied in advanced or intensive work. Professor Flom's paper gives us the needed information on all these matters, and on others equally interesting.

It is just a half century since a course in one of the Northern languages was first announced in an American college catalogue, viz., in that of New York University in 1858. But as the arrangement was only temporary and little or nothing resulted from it, a passing reference to it will suffice. The real beginning of the study of the Scandinavian languages in this country seems to date from their simultaneous introduction into the curricula of the University of Wisconsin and Cornell University in 1869. Professor R. B. Anderson was the pioneer instructor at Wisconsin and Professor Willard Fiske at Cornell. Columbia University followed in 1880-81, Professor C. Sprague Smith giving a course in Danish that year. At Harvard the first encouragement of the study of Old Norse came from Professor Francis J. Child, who was also thoroughly at home in the modern Danish and Swedish. But the first formal course in Icelandic was given in 1888 by Professor Eugene H. Babbitt to a class of ten students. Norwegian was introduced in 1899.

At the present time about one hundred courses are being offered in twenty-nine of our higher institutions of learning. Of the latter, ten are in the East, sixteen in the Central States, and three on the Pacific Coast. In the South no institution has permanently introduced the subject, and it has actually been taught in only one.

The literary side of Old Norse has been emphasized at Harvard, Yale, and Wisconsin, and